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THE BALKAN FEDERATION

by Constantin Fotitch

While the representatives of 16 European nations are endeavoring to draw up a unified plan for their economic reconstruction, as suggested by Secretary Marshall, the Soviet Union is quietly tightening its grip in Eastern and Central Europe. One outward sign of this activity is the increasing emphasis in Moscow on "Balkan federation."

Soviet opposition to the Marshall plan is allegedly based on desire to protect the independence of smaller European nations, and on anxiety to prevent the economies of these countries from becoming "dependent upon the interests of the United States of America."

This Soviet anxiety to protect the independence of the small nations has been sardonically exemplified in the case of Czechoslovakia, considered to be "relatively" the most independent among the nations within the Russian zone of influence. Under Soviet pressure the government of Czechoslovakia was forced to retract its previous unanimously voiced decision to attend the Paris conference.

On the other hand, the Soviets have recently concluded trade agreements with Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, integrating the economies of these countries with their own. The exact contents of the treaties have not been made public, but it may be safely assumed that the satellites will be left with very small quantities of production surpluses to be "directed to markets of their own choosing," one of Russia's announced objectives in opposing the Marshall plan.

The Soviet Union, after vigorous opposition to the Marshall plan, is now proceeding through the device of "federation" to nullify the efforts of the remaining 16 European nations to work out a continental plan of economic recovery with American aid and participation. Thus it is hoped to create a final chasm between Eastern and Western Europe.

The longer the shattered economy of Europe remains chaotic, the stronger the Soviet hope that the western part of Europe will also become fertile soil for Bolshevism and ultimately fall under its domination. There is the further expectation that prolonged unrest in Europe will have its repercussion in a severe depression in the United States.

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In determining their foreign policy, the Soviet leaders rely upon this anticipation to a considerable extent.

Recently a member of a satellite Embassy in Washington, entrusted with the special mission of analyzing the economic situation in this country, confided to an intimate circle that "the day when the number of unemployed in the United States reaches the figure of ten million, we will be around the corner," implying that the Soviet Union will thus have won world supremacy without battle and in spite of the atomic bomb.

II

The Soviet is now concentrating effort on creating the impression that it alone can bring the nations of Europe into closer collaboration through the device of federation. Effective and subtle propaganda presents this policy as the only one which can save Europe from economic collapse and restore its prosperity and well-being.

Adroitly, the Soviet also exploits the feelings prevalent among European peoples for that closer economic collaboration which was strongly manifested after World War I. In 1930, Aristide Briand, supported by many outstanding statesmen from different European countries, made a bold attempt for the creation of a European federation. Unfortunately he failed, due mainly to Fascist opposition; to the British fetish of the balance of power and to American indifference.

After World War II the idea of European federation inevitably imposes itself among the peoples of Europe with greater force than before. Today, they are aware that exaggerated application of the principle of national sovereignty, with all its political and economic implications, must, to a great extent, be sacrificed for the sake of common interests. They fully realize that the reconstruction of Europe can only be achieved through international economic collaboration.

The Soviet strategy is to oppose a federation of free peoples of Europe, who would in common interest abandon a part of their unrestricted national sovereignty, by the formation of several federations composed of puppet States entirely subservient to Moscow. In trying to make its policy more attractive the Soviet pretends to be the only reliable defender of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination for the smaller nations.

The Balkan peninsula seems to have been chosen as the proving ground for the application of the Soviet conception of federation. Today all the Balkan countries, with the exception of Greece, are completely gleichgeshaltet. They are ruled by trusted and experienced Communist leaders imposed by the Kremlin as local dictators who will

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carry out every command of the Politburo. Tito, in Yugoslavia: Georgij Dimitrov in Bulgaria and Enver Hodza in Albania comprise a first-class team of Soviet officials trained to this end.

III

By realizing Soviet domination over the Balkans through the medium of a federation, Stalin would achieve an objective vainly pursued by Czarist Russia throughout the Nineteenth Century. In 1878, after a successful war with the Ottoman Empire, Russia almost achieved Balkan domination by creating a puppet Bulgaria embracing the larger part of the peninsula. This satellite was to serve as the instrument of Russian expansion in the Balkans and towards the Mediterranean.

Great Britain's alarm was clearly expressed in the circular letter which her Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield, sent to British envoys accredited to the Great Powers, stating that "it would give Russia a prepondering influence over political and economical relations in this [Aegean] Sea." To protect her imperial life line from this Russian menace, Great Britain called a Congress in Berlin, which nullified the treaty concluded between Russia and Turkey at San Stefano. Upon his return from the Berlin Congress, Lord Beaconsfield was triumphantly received in London as the statesman who had saved the Empire and had brought home a "peace with honor."

Almost seventy years later, Great Britain has to face an even more serious Russian menace in this part of Europe. Unable to resist alone, the British Government this time asked the assistance of the United States. Unlike Disraeli, President Truman had no opportunity to call a Congress but had to resort to more direct methods in order to block the Soviet drive toward complete Balkan domination.

The Soviet answer to American aid to Greece and Turkey has been to intensify the pressure on Greece, and simultaneously to hasten the plan for a unified Balkan federation. During the past weeks there has been active collaboration among the Balkan puppets. The Romanian Premier Groza paid visits to both Belgrade and Sofia; Enver Hodza went from Albania to Moscow where he was received with great pomp by Molotov. Last, but not least, Georgij Dimitrov, for many years secretary of the supposedly dissolved Comintern, made a state visit to Belgrade. Dimitrov's reception was marked with elaborate ceremonies, presided over by Tito "resplendent in a white uniform." This trip by the Bulgarian dictator was hailed by the Communist press everywhere as an event "the consequences of which will have historic importance."

The stage is now set for a formal constitution of a Balkan federation. The timing will be decided by the Kremlin. Peoples of Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania will be told that their old dream of

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"the Balkans for the Balkan peoples," has finally been realized -- thanks to the Soviet Union. One question, still to be settled, is who will preside over this federation, Tito or Dimitrov? In spite of Tito's glamour, so reminiscent of that of Goering, Soviet preferences will probably go to Dimitrov whose longtime secretaryship of the Comintern outranks the marshaldom of Tito.

IV

A problem still under discussion is the fate of Macedonia. Should this province become a fifth State in the united Balkan federation or should it remain a member of the Yugoslav federated republic? The promotion of Macedonia to statehood would have the objective of detaching its part of Macedonia from Greece. But, since the action against Greece is aimed at imposing a Communist government over the whole country, it is more likely that the problem of Macedonian resurrection will be left for later consideration.

For a long time the peoples of the Balkans have struggled to create a free federation which would strengthen them against Great Power exploitation. But the Soviet-sponsored federation will not be a union of free peoples, formed by freely elected representatives. Led by dictators imposed by the Kremlin, it will be a union entirely in the services of Soviet policy.

Communist propaganda will, at the psychological moment, present this Balkan federation as a great achievement and a new Soviet contribution to the consolidation of peace. But the peoples of the Balkans, being on the spot, will realize that they have lost the last trace of their independence and that the new federation is a further step toward their complete integration into the Soviet Union.

With its expandable formula of Federal Union, the Soviet State has not reached its final boundaries and the old pattern of annexation is now conveniently replaced by the "demand for admission into the Soviet Union." This strategy was successful in 1940 with the Baltic States and is now applied to the Balkans. There will be still other victims unless the policy announced by President Truman and Secretary Marshall, undoubtedly supported by an immense majority of the peoples of Europe, is pursued with determination.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. IV, NO. 34

By Frank C. Hanighen August 20, 1947

"A reactionary is a man who does not believe that the Chinese Communists are merely agrarian democrats." So runs a current definition. By this measuring stick, it is noted that a very encouraging number of "reactionaries" have recently been named to top level posts in the State Department. Hopes, therefore, are on the rise that the new chiefs will eliminate the influence of various fellow travellers in their respective divisions. In any case, the new personnel offers promise that the foreign policy will become more consistent in its anti-appeasement phase. The trend away from so-called "liberalism" is probably under way.

Prominent among the new "reactionary" State Department leaders is Under Secretary Robert A. Lovett. Mr. Lovett never was the dupe of fellow traveller propaganda during the war, as were so many of his colleagues in the Pentagon. As Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Lovett had a keen and farseeing view of what was likely to come in Europe after the end of the conflict. It is a little known fact that, in May, 1945, directly after the German surrender, Lovett wrote a report which would earn for him truly sibylline repute were it published today. In this Lovett recommended to the Chief of Staff and the President that peace treaties should be negotiated immediately, without any delay.

He had his reasons. He warned that Soviet Russia could only be influenced by the presence of force; and that, if merely verbal methods of suasion were used, a bad peace would result. If the American Army and Air Force were in Europe on a war footing, American treaty makers would succeed in obtaining an enduring European peace settlement. And, he further warned, the Army and Air Force would be drastically demobilized within a year following the German surrender. The report was ignored.

Lovett doubtless considers his 1945 report "water over the dam." But now, with equal prevision, he is seeking to build up a harmonious and truly American team in his Department. Norman Armour, chief political Assistant Secretary, is giving special attention to Latin American affairs and reportedly has driven out the "liberal" atmosphere created by Braden. Mr. John Hickerson, recently named to head the key division of Western European Affairs is a true "reactionary." He is considered to be an improvement over his predecessor, Freeman Matthews, who was only mildly "reactionary." But, the most striking move into the new realm of "reaction" was the recent appointment of W. W. Butterworth to head the Far Eastern Division; under John Carter Vincent often referred to as the "Red Cell," because of its sympathy for the Chinese Communists. Mr. Butterworth has never been the patron of "Red China."

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One of the current mysteries of our occupation of Germany is the existence and activity of an organization known as the "Counter Intelligence Corps." It is a mystery because (1) it has no connection with Army Counter Intelligence; (2) it reports to no ascertainable authority either in GHQ or in the War Department; and (3) it seems to devote much of its time to shadowing members of the American occupation regime and American visitors. It is staffed largely by former German refugees who have lately become American citizens. During the Hoover mission's trip through Germany last spring, members of this "Corps" were tailing Mr. Hoover and his aides. When one of the aides complained to General Clay's staff, the reply was: "That outfit shadows us too." Inquiries in the Pentagon bring the answer that the Corps has no links either with Army Intelligence or with Central Intelligence.

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The study of economics today is hardly an exact science. In 1945, the Wall Street experts were predicting good times and high employment; and the New Deal economists in Washington were forecasting a real depression and 10 million unemployed within six months. Today the roles are reversed. The Street is rather inclined to stress discouraging omens and to fear a recession, with a resultant cautious securities market. The Government analysts, on the other hand, are bullish on business prospects. There are, of course, many exceptions on both sides. But, broadly speaking, this is the general situation.

Some suspicious observers are wondering if Government economists are still thinking politically, as when they predicted bad times to bolster the case against demobilization of wartime agencies. By and large, they would like a Truman victory, which might be undermined if bad business conditions develop. Favorable forecasts now might bolster confidence.

Be that as it may. Last week we talked with a Government economist who, we believe, remains uninfluenced by political considerations. In the qualified verbiage of his craft, he was rather optimistic. This is the way he looks at the immediate future:

If recessive tendencies are on the increase in September, the cashing of the GI bonds will provide a cushion. Next, in November, curbs on installment buying will be removed, stimulating purchases; and in December there may also be unusual disbursements in the form of extra dividends from corporations. After the first of the year, both Administration and Congress will presumably vie with one another in framing real tax reductions, with inevitable inflationary effects. Finally, if exports droop as time goes on, the domestic market shows enough strength to take up the slack. It's a rosy picture -- this New Deal view. But the Stock Market continues incredulous.

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In these days of political doldrums, news from Minnesota has given political fans a small but interesting morsel on which to chew. Congressman Harold Knutson, head of the powerful Ways and Means Committee of the Lower House, has come out against Governor Dewey because, he says, the next President should not "enter the White House wearing sneakers." The Congressman's views are embodied in an editorial in the Wadena (Minn.) Pioneer Journal, a small town weekly, which he owns and publishes.

This stand of Knutson includes some tactical considerations. Simultaneously, he backs Governor Stassen (whose views the House leader has never liked) and proposes a "stop-Dewey" alliance between the supporters of Stassen and those of Senator Taft. Knutson has reportedly been sympathetic to the Taft candidacy. Thus Knutson combines his liking for the Ohioan with his conformity to the tradition of state loyalty in backing Stassen, Minnesota's favorite son. To many in Washington, the "act" looks very much like a politician "standing on his head," for there has never been any love lost between the Stassen and Taft forces. But the Knutson utterance has some importance as a symptom of a rising opposition to Dewey and of a groping for alliances to prevent the nomination of the New York Governor.

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Sweden, home of the "Middle Way," gives free enterprise more scope than does Norway where there is a completely controlled planned economy. Farmand, individualistic Norwegian weekly, prints a "Letter from Norway to Sweden," in which the Norwegian writer, after a visit to Stockholm, employs the sharp weapon of irony to contrast the conditions in the two countries -- much to the disadvantage of his own.

"Dear Friend: . . . It was rather depressing to observe how little advanced the Swedish community is as compared with ours. We noticed it the moment we

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emerged from the Central Station [in Stockholm]. A number of empty taxis were stationed there. It is, of course, very nice -- and for us Norwegians an unusual experience -- to get into a taxi without waiting all day for one, but have you ever stopped to consider the terrible waste of valuable labor involved? We at least reacted immediately at this waste of time merely to be at the service of people. Our authorities have arranged everything quite differently. Here all efforts are concentrated on the job of reconstruction. Everyone in the whole country is geared to this job. In particular, many people take government jobs in order to do their share. In this way, great personal sacrifices are being made. [Farmand has been exposing the enormous increase in the Norwegian bureaucracy.]

"It was strange to see the stores and to visit the restaurants [in Sweden]. I must confess that I was taken aback when the section manager of a department store came over and asked whether we had found what we wanted, or when the headwaiter of a restaurant inquired, 'Has everything been satisfactory?'

"It seemed to us quite old-fashioned. Actually it is rather unfair, because the customers and guests are put into a frame of mind which might even bring about an increase in the consumption of goods. Here in Norway we accept what is offered. We make no attempt to get anything better. That makes life much more simple. Anyway it was very interesting to experience your easy and pulsating way of life. It was also strange to find such an abundance of commodities available, but being Norwegian I cannot help thinking that behind this abundance there is a much greater capitalist exploitation than here in Norway."

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The intellectuals of Union Square now know what they must think about Existentialism. For Moscow has spoken ex cathedra on the subject, in the holy scriptures of Pravda. Les Temps Modernes, the French organ of Existentialism, edited by the principal writer of the school, J. P. Sartre, has had sense of humor enough to print a French translation of this attack, from which we quote:

"The [French] reactionary bourgeoisie has taken Sartre under its patronage. He is necessary to them in their struggle against democracy, against Marxism. The destruction of Fascism has emptied the old ideological arsenal of the '200 families.' Something new is needed. And so, with the putrid vapors of mysticism, they seek to blind the youth of France. . . .

"The French bourgeoisie is not alone in appreciating the services of Sartre. American reaction looks with favor on him. Last year Sartre made a tour of American universities. He gave lectures at Yale, Harvard, Princeton -- citadels of American university conservatism[!!!]. The American press gave him some noisy advertising. Life published a eulogistic biography of him, underlining that Sartre, 'the most fashionable philosopher today' represents himself as 'the principal adversary of Marxism on the front of ideas.' This means that the fashionable products from Sartre's workshop are assured of as favorable a reception in the United States as are the fashion productions of Paquin [Parisian dress designer]. . . .

"So, we discover the economic, social and political aspects of Existentialism . . . . Sartre knew what was expected of him. Shortly after his return from the United States, he published a special number of his journal, consecrated to America. That number ran to almost 400 pages. . . . France is too poor for the Existentialists and its future frightens them. In the progress of class-consciousness among the laboring masses, in the success of the Communists, in the popularity of Marxist ideas, they rightly read their own death warrant. They turn towards American reaction as to a mother country, as well as to a market where they can sell their wares. As enemies of Marxism, they are necessary to the rich American bourgeoisie"

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Book Events

The Man Versus the State, by Herbert Spencer. Our Enemy the State, by Albert Jay Nock. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd. $2.50 each.

The Caxton Printers of Caldwell, Idaho, have done a valuable service for the present generation of readers by making available in new editions two important books of political philosophy that have been for some years out of print but which today are more apposite than ever, since each is concerned with the most menacing evil of our times. This evil of course is the rise of the all-devouring State with its revival of human slavery under a new guise and on a grandiose scale.

The Man Versus the State is a collection of essays in which the celebrated Victorian philosopher, Herbert Spencer, analyzing the political tendencies of the later Nineteenth Century, predicted the consequences we now behold. He was not, to be sure, quite alone in this prevision; Lord Acton also foresaw the revival of serfdom as the consequence of Socialist tendencies and Tocqueville feared it as the consequence of the strongly centralizing and militaristic trends of European democracy. Spencer's political essays are elaborations of the doctrines set forth in his treatise on Social Statics, first published in 1850. This famous opus, as the late Albert Jay Nock observed in an introduction prepared for the present edition, "is to the philosophy of individualism what the work of the German idealist philosophers is to the doctrine of Statism"; and some no doubt will recall an occasion on which the late Justice Holmes rebuked his colleagues for attempting to read the Social Statics into the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

It must of course be admitted that Spencer's political doctrine is at barely one remove from the position which is called philosophic anarchism. I have no room here to discuss what seem to me certain conceptual fallacies inherent in this position, although I have dealt with them in another place; in any case they do not greatly impair the validity of Spencer's arguments concerning the danger which inheres in all political organization. Moreover his theories were a logical extension of his evolutionary concept of ethics. Conduct, he held, is the adaptation of an organism to its environment, and happiness is that conduct, or form of adaptation, most conducive to the social good. The State, therefore, has no other function than to make possible the quest of this happiness; each effort by the State to extend its sovereignty must be resisted, and especially every effort made on pretext of social or economic amelioration. As with the State, so with every other corporate institution; each advance in organization is inevitably attended by the growth of the regulatory apparatus and a corresponding increase in the power of the officials and bureaucracy. Thus the tendency toward organization of the economic life must lead in the end to the creation of new ruling classes, to enforced rather than voluntary co-operation, and to the abandonment of the principle of free contract for the principle of hereditary status.

Our Enemy the State, the other work to be thus republished, is by Mr. Nock himself. It is an examination of certain aspects of American history, and in particular of the New Deal, in the light of Spencer's doctrines and those of the German theorists, Gumplowitz and Oppenheimer, whom he invests with the authority of exact scientists, although their assumptions concerning the origin of the State have been challenged by many anthropologists and historians. Mr. Nock's thesis is that Society and the State are not merely distinct but antagonistic entities, that whatever benefits the State injures Society, and that each enhancement of the political power weakens and impoverishes the social natures of men.

Both Spencer and Nock were masters of a wonderfully precise and lucid prose, and each of these books is remarkable among political treatises in being, quite apart from its argument, wholly pleasurable to read. -- J. M. Lalley

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